

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT
COURT FOR THE Middle DISTRICT
OF TENNESSEE Nashville DIVISION

RECEIVED

OCT 25 2024

U.S. District Court
Middle District of TN

John Lawrence
(NAME)

#267123
(Prison Id. No.)

Prisoners of Tennessee Dept. of
(Name)
Corrections / Class

(Prison Id. No.)

Plaintiff(s)

V.

Tennessee Dept. of Correction
(Name)

Commissioner Frank Strada
(Name)

Defendant(s)

(List the names of all the plaintiffs filing
this lawsuit. Do not use "et al." Attach
Additional sheets if necessary.)

Civil Action No. _____
(To be assigned by the Clerk's Office.
Do not write in this space.)

JURY TRIAL REQUESTED ☒ YES ☐ NO

(List the names of all defendants
against whom you are filing this
Lawsuit. Do you see "et al." Attach
Additional sheets if necessary.)

COMPLAINT FOR VIOLATION OF CIVIL RIGHTS FILED
PURSUANT TO 42 U.S.C. § 1983

1. PARTIES TO THIS LAWSUIT

A. Plaintiff(s) bringing this lawsuit:

1. Name of the first plaintiff: John Lawrence
Prison I.D. of the first plaintiff: #267123
Address of the first plaintiff: PO Box 2000, Wartburg TN 37887

Status of Plaintiff: CONVICTED ☐ PRETRIAL DETAINEE ☐

2. Name of the second plaintiff: Prisoners of the Tennessee Dept. of Corrections / Class
Prison I.D. of the second plaintiff: _____
Address of the second plaintiff: State of Tennessee

Status of Plaintiff: CONVICTED ☒ PRETRIAL DETAINEE ☐

(Include the name of the institution and mailing address with zip code for each plaintiff. If and plaintiff
changes his or her address, he or she must notify the Court immediately. If there are more sheet of paper.)

B. Defendant(s) against whom this lawsuit is being brought: 1) Tennessee Dept. Of Correction

2) Name of the first defendant: TDCC Commissioner Frank Strada
Place of employment of the first defendant: Tennessee Dept of Corrections
First defendant's address: 6th Floor, Rachel Jackson Building, 320 6th Ave. N.
Nashville TN 37423-
Named in official capacity? ☒ Yes ☐ No
Named in individual capacity? ☒ Yes ☐ No

3) Name of the second defendant: Warden Shawn Phillips
Place of employment of the second defendant: Morgan County Correctional complex
Second defendant's address: Morgan County Correctional complex
PO Box 2000, Wartburg TN 37887
Named in official capacity? ☒ Yes ☐ No
Named in individual capacity? ☐ Yes ☐ No

(If there are more than two defendants against whom you are bringing this lawsuit, you must list on a separate sheet of paper the name of each additional defendant, his or her place of employment, address, and the capacity in which you are suing that defendant. If you do not provide the names of such additional defendants, they will not be included in your lawsuit. If you do not provide each defendant's proper name, place of employment, and address, the Clerk will be unable to serve that defendant should process issue.)

2. JURISDICTION

A. Jurisdiction is asserted pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983 (applies to state prisoners).
Jurisdiction is also invoked pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1343(a)(3).

If you wish to assert jurisdiction under different or additional statutes, you may list them
Below

3. PREVIOUS LAWSUITS (The following information must be provided by each plaintiff.)

A. Have you or any of the other plaintiffs in this lawsuit filed any other lawsuit(s) in the United States District Court for the Middle District of Tennessee, or in any other federal or State court. Yes ☒ No ☐

B. If you checked the box marked "yes" above, provide the following information:

1. Parties to the previous lawsuit:

Plaintiffs John Lawrence

Defendants Coffee County Sheriff Dept.

2. In what court did you file the previous lawsuit? US District Court

3. What was the case number of the previous lawsuit? Do not have access to that record

4. What was the Judge's name to whom the case was assigned? Do not have access to that Record
5. What type of case was it (for example, habeas corpus or civil rights action)? Civil Rights
6. When did you file the previous lawsuit? (Provide the year, if you do not know the exact date.) 2015
7. What was the result of the previous lawsuit? For example, was the case dismissed or appealed, or is it still pending? Dismissed on my Request, Private Resolution
8. When was the previous lawsuit decided by the court? (Provide the year, if you do not know the exact date.) NA
9. Did the circumstances of the prior lawsuit involve the same facts or circumstances that you are alleging in this lawsuit? ☐ Yes ☒ No

(If you have filed more than one prior lawsuit, list the additional lawsuit(s) on a separate sheet of paper, and provide the same information for the additional lawsuit(s).)

4. **EXHAUSTION**

- A. Are the facts of your lawsuit related to your present confinement? ☒ Yes ☐ No
- B. If you checked the box marked "No" in question 3.B above, provide the name and address of the prison or jail to which the facts of this lawsuit pertain. _____

- C. Do the facts of your lawsuit relate to your confinement in a Tennessee state prison? ☒ Yes ☐ NO

(If you checked the box marked "No," proceed to question 4.G IF you checked the box marked "Yes," proceed to question 4.D.)

- D. Have you presented these facts to the prison authorities through the state grievance procedure? ☒ Yes ☐ No
- E. If you checked the box marked "Yes" in question 3.D above:
What steps did you take? Filed multiple grievances on issues.

What was the response of prison authorities? only one response, "Non-Grievable"

- F. If you checked the box marked "No" in question 4.d above, explain why not. _____
- G. Do the facts of your lawsuit pertain to your confinement in a detention facility operated

I am a member of a class of prisoners within the Tennessee Department of Corrections (TDOC) known as Protective Custody. I am a member of this class of prisoners because I was involved in an altercation with members of a security threat group or street Gang and received injuries. This was actually the 5th time I had been assaulted by this Gang and one specific member in fact. This specific attack was carried out because of a previous suit in the District Court where I was repeatedly assaulted in a county jail where these individuals and Gang was named. See: "John Lawrence vs. Coffee County Sheriff Dept. US Dist. Ct. 2015." After the attack the Administration of Morgan County Correctional Complex (MCCX) deemed my life to be in danger after investigation of the incident and placed me onto a Security Designation custody level of equal status to Maximum Custody level though not because of dangerous or unmanageable behavior nor for punitive reasons but to secure my safety. Note: that Protective Custody is not a security status for punishment and that prior to the new directive by Commissioner Frank Strada which this action attacks, protective custody prisoners, as quoted in TDOC State Policy 506.16 "living conditions for segregated inmates", Protective custody prisoners enjoyed the same property allowance as that of general population.

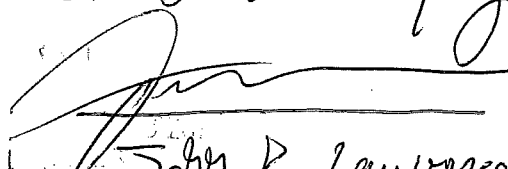
I represent for the purpose of this action the class of Protective Custody prisoners within the Tennessee Dept. of Corrections. Myself and the class of prisoners represented hold that, based on numerous years in TDOC Prisons, conversations with staff officers, Administration, etc that TDOC has a severe security issue with abundance of Drugs/Contraband as well as huge underground economy and profit business in these items, controlled by security threat groups, and what would be understood to go with such a problem. It's gotten so bad that prisoners needing Protective Custody due to drug addictions threatening their lives further through drug debts enforced by these

security threat groups. It's grown so severe statewide in every prison that there simply is not enough bedspace for Protective Custody. Being that Prisoners have a right to reasonable protection from harm TDOC cannot simply limit the Protective Custody population. So to stem this flow of huge drug debted Protective Custody Prisoners, and deter them from seeking protective custody, Commissioner Frank Strada, Wardens of the TDOC Prisons, et al have established a deterrent being the Denial of Protective Custody Prisoners order of Personal property packages. This includes shoes, clothing, grooming articles, writing materials, TVs/Electronics, Religion Faith Group items, etc. With this complaint is included the catalog of items allowed to other Maximum Security Prisoners. Not that in the memo advising of this prohibition that the only Prisoners also subject to property order Restriction other than Protective Custody Prisoners are those who are serving Punitive Disciplinary Offenses of which they are under Punishment after Due Process Conviction for behavior rule violations. It's nothing less than a Punishment outside Disciplinary Due Process Conviction for being a Protective Custody Prisoner. Myself Not being of the drug debt variety this deterrent targets. The Protective Custody Prisoners are allowed to keep personal property items already in possession but are not allowed to order any future items.

The Protective Custody class complaint with this violation of our civil rights is as follows. Overtly the scheme is discriminatory and cannot be denied as a punishment, a hardship outside normal prison liberties, rights, and privileges ordinarily enjoyed by prisoners. Simply because we exercise our Right to be protected from harm. The Tennessee Dept. of Corrections, the Commissioner Frank Strada, and collective Wardens of the TDOC facilities inflict a hardship upon our class of Protective Custody Prisoners in order to encourage Prisoners NOT to exercise that right to be free from harm. This is alone a violation of Prisoners Constitutional rights. Also at MCEX and most other Prisons Protective Custody

are housed in maximum security, solitary confinement, 23 and 1 hour lockdown which is in itself a harsh, mentally taxing environment. To add this deterrent condition denies prisoners things such as art materials, cold/hot weather clothing, TVs/Radios which break the stressful solitary daily living conditions. Also, writing materials for personal mail and legal mail correspondence outside quantity of paper/pens/envelopes supplied by facility is also severely restricted by this new deterrent. Religious Faith pray items such as for myself as Islamic Faith Observer I'm not allowed Prayer oils, Kufi Religious Headwear, no Prayer mats/rugs; and same is true for members of other Faiths items. This is a discriminatory restriction upon our practice of our Faith outside those items allowed to be possessed/used by all other classes of prisoners. This is only some of the violations noted but overall the practice violates prisoners 1st, 4th, 6th, 8th Amendment rights of the Constitution of the United States.

On behalf of myself and all members of the Class of Protective Custody Prisoners in the Custody of the Tennessee Dept. of Corrections we pray Relief from said Practice and Rights violations.

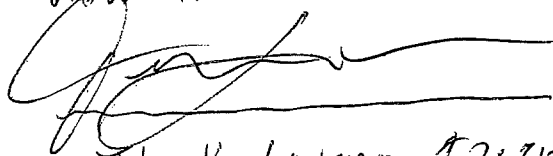

Pro se.
John R. Lawrence #267123

The Prisoners of the State of Tennessee Department of Corrections are currently being denied the Order of Books/Printed Materials from vendors or organizations which include Religious Books and Legal Manuals/Books. This violates Prisoners Religious Freedom and Access to the Courts for any Religious manuals/Instruction not provided by chaplains which are extremely limited groups, and severely restricts Prisoners ability to litigate Criminal Cases and especially Civil Rights matters of Civil Rights violations, example Being My Facility Morgan County Correctional Complex has No Manuals/Books Recognized By the Bar, etc on Civil Litigation whereby its all but impossible for Prisoners to bring complaints before the Honorable United States District Court as I am currently, aided only because of my years inside Prison law libraries as a former Legal Aid and prior experience litigating a complaint before the Honorable Court.

This problem is vast and encompasses the entire TDOC Prison system state and private facilities. It serves no penological purpose that outweighs the Prisoners Constitutional Rights violated, is in the case of legal restriction and access to the Courts dangerous to Prisoners Health, Safety, and well being, or in the case of Religious matters is morally and spiritually destructive sending Prisoners back to society potentially worse for the Prison experience due to moral & spiritual neglect.

The problem affects not only myself but every Prisoner in the State of Tennessee Department of Corrections therefore is a Class issue where this action should be certified as a Class Action and of scope myself as an unlicensed legal professional and pro se litigant is not capable of litigating in its complexity as such nor legally just for me to do on behalf of the huge Prison Population effected by Commissioner Frank Strick's Book Bar, etc.

wherefore myself as well as the class of TDOC Prisoners represented do pray this Honorable Court Grant Relief from said Practice and Rights violations

 Prose.
John K. Lawrence, #267123

P. 4

Myself, Plaintiff John Lawrence, and the Class of Prison of which I am a member, and Represent in this action, "Protective Custody Prisoners" as defined in TDOC Policy "506.16" and "404.09" as those prisoners "separated from general population for the purpose of providing safety to inmates requiring such, as well as the entire Adult Prison Population of the Tennessee Dept. of Corrections effected by the Religious and Legal Printed Book Ban, hold the following Rights Granted us by the Constitution of the United States are violated by the actions of the defendants:

Amendment I. Free Exercise of Religion

Amendment V. Right of Due Process

Amendment VII. Unrestricted Access to the Civil Courts

Amendment VIII. Cruel and Unusual Punishment

We hold the practices or policies reprovable are oppressive, discriminatory, and are done solely to create a hardship, cruel living conditions, impede judicial access, and discourage prisoners exercising the Right to be safe from threats to their safety/wellbeing from doing so due to an enhanced cruel living condition than those enjoyed by all other classes of prisoners except punitive under disciplinary punishments.

We Pray the Honorable Court Grant Relief from said violations.

 Pro se
John Lawrence # 267123

By city or county law enforcement agencies (for example, city or county jail, workhouse, etc.)
___ Yes ___ NO

H. If "Yes" to the question above, have you presented these facts to the authorities operating the detention facility? ___ Yes ___ No

I. If you checked the box marked "Yes" in question 3.H above:

1. What steps did you take? _____

2. What was the response of the authorities who run the detention facility? _____

If you checked the box marked "No" in question 4.H above, explain why not. _____

5. **CAUSE OF ACTION**

Briefly explain which of your constitutional rights were violated:

See attached Pages

6. **STATEMENT OF FACTS**

State the relevant facts of your case as briefly as possible. Include the dates when the incidents or events occurred, where they occurred, and how each defendant was involved. Be sure to include the names of other persons involved and the dates and places of their involvement.

If you set forth more than one claim number each claim separately and set forth each claim in a separate paragraph sheets, if necessary. Use 8-½ inch x 11-inch paper. Write on one side only, and leave a 1-inch margin on all 4 sides.

See attached Pages

7. **RELIEF REQUESTED:** State exactly what you want the Court to order each defendant to do for you.

*Declaratory Judgment
Compensatory Damages TO COVER COST OF ACTION.*

Nominal Damages as the Honorable Court Finds Proper and Just
Punitive Damages as the Honorable Court Finds Proper and Just
Temporary Injunction and Restraining Orders to stop violation until verdict.

I request a jury trial. ☒ Yes ☐ No

8. **CERTIFICATION**

I (we) certify under the penalty of perjury that the foregoing complaint is true the best of my (our) information, knowledge and belief.

Signature: [Signature] Date: 10-16-24

Prison Id. No. 267123

Address (Include the city, state and zip code.): PO Box 2000
Wartburg TN 37887-2000

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Prison Id. No. _____

Address (Include the city, state, and zip code.): _____

ALL PLAINTIFFS MUST SIGN AND DATE THE COMPLAINT, and provide the information requested above. If there are more than two plaintiffs, attach a separate sheet of paper with their signatures, dates, prison identification numbers, and addresses.

ALL PLAINTIFFS MUST COMPLETE, SIGN, AND DATE SEPARATE APPLICATIONS TO PROCEED IN DISTRICT COURT WITHOUT PREPAYING FEES OR COSTS, if not paying the civil filing fee.

SUBMIT THE COMPLAINT AND (1) THE REQUIRED FILING FEE OR (2) COMPLETED APPLICATION TO PROCEED IN DISTRICT COURT WITHOUT PREPAYING FEES AND COSTS TOGETHER. Complaints received without the required filing fee or application to proceed without prepayment of fees will be returned. Filing fees and applications to proceed without prepayment of fees submitted without a complaint will be returned.

John Lawrence #267123
MicX 264-267
PO Box 2000
Wartburg TN 37887-2000



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U.S. District Court
Nashville, Tennessee

M.C.C.X.

OCT 21 2024



United States District Court
Middle District of Tennessee
Clerk of the Court
801 Broadway, Rm. A845
Nashville TN 37203-3816

Legal Mail

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